

CHARLES OLSON

Not the nightingale perched on Orpheus' skull,  
Not the firebird that fumes in the volcano's mouth,  
Not the eagle Caesar parades at Circus Maximus,  
Not the vulture pecking at Prometheus' liver,  
Not the Bantam cock bristling in the pine-woods,  
Not the falcon drowsing in Byzantium,  
Not the peacock caged in Kore's winter palace,  
Not the swan in heat that straddles a painted paradise,  
Not Shiva's hawk screeching in the clouds above Carmel  
Point,  
Not the crested god chiseled into the Mayan Calendar,  
Not the gull gliding inland over Famine's corrugated  
river,  
Not even crow, old black wing, King of Carrion,  
Rather this ragged crane from Gloucester spearing frogs  
in cold hell, in thicket.

BY-PRODUCTS

I make my living hustling herring heads  
and ground-up lobster shells —  
Crustacea pulverized into a one percent paste.  
In Prospect Harbor, I listen to the dubious tales  
of Down East fishermen as they radio in their catches.  
Every bait dealer is a cut-throat customer.  
What can't be sold off becomes compost  
or is trucked south to a rendering plant.  
I recall when fish scales were a commodity;  
now they're swept into chlorinated drains.  
The sardine business requires guts, brains and luck.  
Bad weather, sudden temperature shifts in the North  
Atlantic  
and a thousand other unpredictable factors come into  
play.  
It all boils down to making use of  
whatever it is that you've got at hand.

UNDER THE WEATHER

The North Atlantic swells with heavy rains,  
high tide, a full moon and gale force winds.  
There are no crossings from Woods Hole.  
The Steamship Authority lashes down the ferries.  
Breakers assault the sand-bagged road to Edgartown.  
A rusted-out pickup truck weaves up-Island,  
its windshield shattered by a fallen branch.  
Uprooted trees screech in the State Forest.  
The wind slaps plate glass,



sandblasts Dutch Boy from window sills, strips  
shingles from saltbox houses in Chilmark.  
Moorings labor in Lambert's Cove.  
The sea claws the Gay Head Cliffs.  
A hurricane slams ashore at Squibnocket.  
Down-Island sewers roil, Five Corners backs up,  
waves push into the post office parking lot.  
A man in oil skins rows across Water Street.  
A lover's roof leaks on the Chop, the power shuts off.  
At the Lamp Post,  
in a candle-lit end-of-the-world atmosphere,  
nurses and firemen dance barefoot till dawn.

— Gene Mahoney

Vineyard Haven MA

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INCA

The Inca became the Inca when the Conquistadors arrived  
and mispronounced the Inca's real name: the Tahuantinsuyo.  
A rather large mispronunciation, true, but then again,  
the Spanish thought they were in China.

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INCA PART TWO

When Pizarro arrived in Peru he found an empire of twelve  
million Inca that had mastered brain surgery, bronze tools,  
gold engravings, terraced farming, quipas, and polygonal  
masonry. Then Pizarro massacred them all.

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INCA PART THREE

Fifteen centuries before Christ, Andean Indians construct-  
ed a city as glorious as Athens. Black granite pyramids,  
white granite temples, sewer systems, aqueducts, amphi-  
theaters, labyrinths, sacrificial altars — these all ex-  
hausted centuries in their construction. But the Indians,  
unlike the Greeks, were wise enough to leave their city  
and abandon it forever.

— Matt Buys

Indianapolis IN